DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 982 JC 020 599

AUTHOR	Hennigan, Jamie
TITLE	The Business of Vocational Education. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges, Los Angeles, CA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-JC-01-09
PUB DATE	2001-10-00
NOTE	4p.; This digest is drawn from "The New Vocationalism in Community Colleges." New Directions for Community Colleges, number 115, edited by Debra D. Bragg. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Fall 2001.
CONTRACT	ED-99-CO-0010
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges. University of California at Los Angeles, 3051 Moore Hall, P.O. Box 951521, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1524. Tel: 310-825-3931. For full text: http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/ERIC/eric.html.
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Role; *Community Colleges; Contract Training; Education Work Relationship; *Partnerships in Education; *School Business Relationship; School Community Relationship; Two Year Colleges; *Vocational Education; Work Experience Programs
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

This digest explores various ways in which businesses have partnered with educational institutions to improve vocational education efforts. It begins the article with an acknowledgment that vocational education has undergone consistent reform in the last decade to satisfy the demands of public, corporate, and government sectors that hold community colleges accountable. According to one study cited in the report, this "new vocationalism" is centered on five core principles: (1) career clusters in fields considered integral to the new economy; (2) integrated curriculums; (3) increased integration with K-16 educational systems; (4) active teaching strategies; and (5) more holistic instruction. It is asserted that active participation by businesses in designing vocational programs that are mutually beneficial to students, businesses, and community colleges is an essential step in the successful implementation of these core principles. The digest also identifies and describes the five most common approaches to new vocationalism implemented by community colleges: tech-prep programs, work-based learning programs, articulated vocational education and applied baccalaureate degree programs, certificate programs for credit and noncredit, and contract and customized training programs. (RC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 467 982

The Business of Vocational Education

ERIC Digest

By

Jamie Hennigan

ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- ❑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ❑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

JC 020 599

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

Clearinghouse for Community Colleges

Digest

October, 2001

EDO-JC-01-09

The Business of Vocational Education

By Jamie Hennigan

Businesses and education, once seen as competing enterprises, and at times, fundamental enemies, have recently begun to embrace one another to create a more holistic, well-rounded education that satisfies both the demands for skilled employees as well as knowledgeable, or intellectually capable citizens. Vocational education, for example, has undergone consistent reform in the last decade to satisfy the demands of public, corporate, and government sectors that hold community colleges accountable. Perhaps the most notable element of change has been the active participation of businesses in developing and implementing initiatives in vocational education programs. This digest, drawn from "The New Vocationalism in Community Colleges" (New Directions for Community Colleges, fall 2001), explores various ways in which business has joined with educational institutions to improve vocational education efforts.

NEW VOCATIONALISM

Vocational education and the role of the community college have evolved beyond that of traditional entry-level workforce training to include training that will "provide individuals with skill sets...to pursue careers in high-wage, high skill occupations" (Jacobs, 2001, p. 93). This metamorphosis, brought about by the changing needs and demands made by the federal government, the private sector, and the business world, has created what is being referred to as "new vocationalism" (Bragg, 2001).

New vocationalism is centered on five core principles as outlined by Bragg (2001). Emphasis is placed upon:

- career clusters that extend from entry-level positions through professional levels in fields considered integral to the new economy.
- an integrated curriculum consisting of both academic and vocational elements.
- more integration into the K-16 educational system and a broader base of economic and social structures.
- active teaching strategies, learner-centered instruction, constructivist theories, and project-based approaches to teaching
- more holistic instruction and a curriculum that is more meaningful in applicability.

Inherent in each of these core principles is the input of business. Active participation by business allows for more comprehensive, tailor-made programs that are mutually beneficial to all parties: students, community colleges, and businesses.

A NECESSARY PARTNERSHIP

Five favored approaches to new vocationalism can be cited: tech-prep programs, work-based learning programs, articulated vocational education and applied baccalaureate degree programs, certificate programs for credit and noncredit, and contract and customized training programs. Bragg (2001) states that while these specific approaches are popular, no single model or approach works best for all institutions. However, an essential element in making new vocationalism a successful and effective venture is the partnership between the business community and the community college. Purposes behind such partnerships include opportunities to "forecast workforce development needs, develop new training opportunities, identify new student markets, and create training and preparation specializations" (Orr, 2001 p. 41). Orr also states that businesses and educational institutions can work collaboratively in problem-solving scenarios and in addressing local workforce and education issues.

For example, many observers have noted the need for an integrated curriculum that involves academic as well as vocational elements. Who better to consult about skills needed in the work place than the very businesses that stand to benefit from a more knowledgeable, highly skilled workforce? Moreover, programs such as tech-prep and work-based learning involve apprenticeships or internships that take place in businesses. The following sections provide examples of business involvement in established initiatives in new vocationalism.

Tech Prep

Brown (2001) describes how Texas has implemented tech-prep programs in response to federal and state legislation. Regional

ED 459 021

partnerships were formed and committees appointed comprised of community college personnel and businesses to "help match tech prep program development with regional labor market demand" (p. 51). The benefits of such partnerships are mutual in that community colleges are able to respond to specific regional labor needs and at the same time identify new student markets and boost enrollment. Overt involvement by the business world is obvious within this initiative.

Work-Based Learning Programs

Johnston (2001) defines workplace learning as any type of "education that takes place outside of the classroom setting" (p. 73). Apprenticeships, internships, and cooperative education programs are among the types of programs considered work-based learning. According to Johnson (2001) several factors contribute to the effectiveness of work-based learning programs. Among these factors are: connections to local markets where work-based programs have the most direct impact and frequent formal and informal communications with local employees that involve college personnel, employers, and employees.

Articulated Vocational Education and Applied Baccalaureate Degree Programs

Transfer education has long been one of the roles of community colleges. Vocational education, historically viewed as terminal, is now encouraging transfer to four-year institutions (Townsend, 2001). While partnerships with business have met with some resistance from universities and other four-year institutions, some business involvement enables institutions to provide specific skills for future employees and to better predict future labor and corporate needs.

Certification for Credit and Noncredit

Formal credit (such as certificates, degrees, diplomas, etc.) is, indeed, important; however, skills and life experiences are equally valid as a form of training/ education. Businesses, in communication with community colleges, have indicated which skills are desired and have, therefore, created certificate programs quickly to meet those needs. "New certificate programs, typically of eighteen to twenty-four credit hours, are popping up in community colleges nationwide as they bundle new and existing courses into skill-based certificate packages"(Bragg, 2001, p. 11). These certificate programs allow for quick recognition of specific skills and training by both businesses and institutions.

Contract and Customized Training Programs

Finally, perhaps the most overt collaborations between businesses and community colleges are manifested in contract and customized training programs. According to Bragg, (2001), "many community colleges engage in a host of partnership arrangements specifically designed for local business and industry"(p. 12). Again, this partnership between businesses and community colleges is mutually beneficial as it provides valuable revenue for community colleges among a multitude of other bonuses.

CONCLUSION

In each of the five initiatives of new vocationalism, business and corporate collaborations are helping to create a more effective, well-rounded, and inclusive education. Partnerships between community colleges and businesses are important. In fact, Brown (2001) states that "by virtue of their mission, community and technical colleges play a pivotal role in the coordination of multiple levels of educational, economic, and community partnerships that link public education with business, industry, and labor" (p. 61). Clearly, as the economy, society, and government change, vocational education will continue to evolve to incorporate new forms of work organizations and technological advances (Yoo, 2001). Keeping up with these changes will take courage and foresight on the part of both community colleges and the business community.

REFREENCES

This digest is drawn from "The new vocationalism in community colleges." New Directions for Community Colleges, Number 115, edited by Debra D. Bragg. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Fall 2001.

Bragg, Debra D. Opportunities and Challenges for the new Vocationalism in American Community Colleges. (pp. 5-16.)

Brown, Carrie H. Two-Year Colleges and Tech Prep Partnerships: A Texas Perspective. (pp. 51-62).

Jacobs, James. Community Colleges and the Workforce Investment Act: Promises and Problems of the New Vocationalism. (pp 93-100).

Johnston, George H. Work-Based Learning: Finding a New Niche. (pp. 73-80)

Orr, Margaret T. Community Colleges and Their Communities: Collaboration for Workforce Development. (pp. 39-50)

Summers, Michael D. The Role of Leadership in Successful Vocational Initiatives. (pp. 17-26).

Townsend, Barbara K. Blurring the Lines: Transforming Terminal Education to Transfer Education. (pp. 73-72).

Yoo, Jung-sup. Sources and Information: Postsecondary Vocational Education. (pp. 101-108).

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education under contract number ED-99-CO-0010. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

☐ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☒ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").